
Education Committee

HB 1288

Brief Description: Revising the essential academic learning requirements and statewide academic assessment system.

Sponsors: Representatives Haler, Santos, Hankins, P. Sullivan, Lovick, Chase, Simpson, Hasegawa, McCune and Kenney.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the State Board of Education to revise the state learning standards in reading, writing, mathematics, and science by September 1, 2007.
- Directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction to select a new assessment with certain required characteristics which will become the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) in 2008-09.
- Repeals the requirement that students must meet state standards on the WASL to earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) for high school graduation starting in 2008.
- Repeals all references to the CAA, retakes of the WASL, and alternative assessments.

Hearing Date: 1/30/07

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Under Washington's academic achievement system, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) is charged with developing state standards that identify the knowledge and skills students are expected to acquire in core academic areas. These are the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs). The SPI is also responsible for developing a statewide academic assessment system for reading, writing, mathematics, and science: the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). The State Board of Education (SBE) has responsibility for a statewide

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

accountability system for student performance, including setting the scores on the WASL that indicate students have met the state standards.

The WASL is administered in reading, writing, and mathematics in grades three through eight and grade ten. The science WASL is administered in fifth, eighth, and tenth grade. Beginning with the class of 2008, most students will be required to meet the state standard on the tenth grade WASL in reading, writing, and mathematics to receive a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA). A CAA will be required for high school graduation. Beginning in 2010, students will also have to pass the science WASL for a CAA. Some students with disabilities will instead receive a Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA) for graduation. In 2006, the Legislature authorized several alternative assessments for students who are unsuccessful on the high school WASL in their first two attempts. These alternatives provide different ways for students to demonstrate they meet the state standards to earn a CAA.

As currently constructed, the WASL is a standards-based test specially designed to measure student achievement of the EALRs. It includes multiple choice and constructed response questions. Results on a school and statewide basis are typically reported as "percent of students meeting standard" in a particular subject for that year. More detailed results are also available, including scale scores and scores for different content "strands" of the test. However, the results do not currently provide reliable information about a student's gain in knowledge from year to year, and the strand scores do not provide reliable diagnostic information about the content areas where students may need additional instruction. The results from the spring administration of the WASL are available the following fall. The results cannot be used to compare to student performance in other states.

Under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), states are required to ensure that all students meet state learning standards in reading and mathematics by 2014. States must set and monitor school and statewide goals for the percent of students meeting standard (Adequate Yearly Progress or AYP). This is sometimes called a "status model" of school accountability. In 2005, the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) announced a pilot project where states could meet their AYP goals by measuring the growth in academic progress that students make from year to year, even if students are not yet meeting standard. The DOE intends to approve no more than ten states for the "growth model" pilot project. Tennessee and North Carolina were approved for the pilot project beginning in 2005-06. Delaware, Arkansas, and Florida have been approved for 2006-07. Nine states have applied for the remaining five slots.

Summary of Bill:

The SBE must appoint an academic standards panel of exemplary educators and nationally-recognized individuals with knowledge and expertise in student learning standards at various grade levels and subjects. By September 1, 2007, the panel recommends revisions to the EALRs in reading, writing, mathematics, and science. The new EALRs must be aligned with national and international standards, as well as aligned with diagnostic and standards-based assessments already used in school districts and in other states. The new EALRs form the basis for revisions of the statewide academic assessment system.

By August 31, 2008, the SPI must select one or more reading, writing, mathematics, and science assessments for state and federal accountability purposes based on the revised EALRs. These

assessments become the new WASL beginning in the 2008-09 school year. The new WASL must have certain characteristics:

- measure annual growth in individual student achievement in a manner that is reliable and valid;
- provide results that are diagnostic;
- be easily administered, quickly and easily scored, and easily shared with parents;
- be designed so that sample and actual tests are promptly available, including individual student results with proper privacy protections;
- permit comparison to school districts and states outside of Washington; and
- meet federal guidelines for both a growth model of accountability and a status model of accountability.

By 2009-10, the SPI must submit a proposal to the U.S. DOE to use a growth model of school accountability for NCLB purposes, based on results from the revised WASL.

All current statutory requirements and references pertaining to the CAA or CIA as a high school graduation requirement are repealed. Also repealed are requirements for students to meet state standards on the WASL beginning in 2008, retake opportunities, and alternative assessments. Instead, the SBE must examine possible uses for the high school WASL within the state's assessment system and review the experience of other states with required exit examinations. The SBE must make recommendations by December 1, 2010, including whether students should be required to pass some or all of the subjects on the WASL for high school graduation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 24, 2007.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed, except for Section 1 pertaining to revising the state EALRs and WASL, which is subject to an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.